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ABSTRACT

Recent trends do not indicate that teachers' traditionally low salaries are improving dramatically, though several states have taken steps to raise salaries and make teaching more attractive. As student enrollments fell by almost 15 percent between 1974 and 1984, the number of teachers decreased by less than one-tenth of 1 percent. The resulting growth in per pupil costs may have held salaries down. Teachers' pay rates are low compared with those of other professionals and other school personnel, have a very limited potential for growth, and have failed to keep pace with inflation. Variations among the states in salaries and salary growth have been wide. While overall educational expenditures have increased by 140 percent since 1974, teacher salaries have decreased as a percentage of current operating expenses. While few states play a central role in determining teachers' salaries, many play an indirect role through such policies as providing aid or establishing minimum salary levels. These findings are based on data (presented in five tables) on the numbers of teachers and pupils, the average salaries, the current expenditures, and the relationships between salaries and expenditures in each of the states. (PGD)

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TEACHER SALARIES AND THE STATES

John Augenblick

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Introduction

During the past 18 months, the teaching profession has received a tremendous amount of attention. Policymakers have become interested in and concerned about such issues as the qualifications of teachers, the availability of teachers, and teacher compensation. Numerous national, regional and state level reports, prepared by educators, the business community and citizens, have recommended ways to attract and retain better qualified teachers, including the provision of scholarships to highly qualified individuals preparing to enter the profession, the development of new certification procedures and the implementation of "career ladders" or "merit" plans to pay teachers based on their qualifications, experience, responsibility and performance.

Much of this concern, and the resulting activity, was stimulated by The National Commission on Excellence in Education. In its report[1] the Commission found that:

- A high proportion of those preparing for a teaching career were being drawn from the bottom quarter of high school graduating classes.
- The teacher preparation curriculum was weighted too heavily in favor of "methods" courses and not enough in favor of subject matter content.
- The average salary of teachers was very low, requiring individuals to supplement their income with part-time and summer employment.

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1. A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. National Commission on Excellence in Education; Washington, D.C., April, 1983.

- Teacher shortages existed in certain subject areas and for certain types of education specialists.

The Commission recommended that:

- Individuals preparing to teach be required to meet higher educational standards, to demonstrate an aptitude for teaching and to demonstrate competence in an appropriate academic discipline.
- Salaries for teachers be increased and made professionally competitive, market-sensitive and performance-based.
- Teachers work for eleven months each year.
- Career ladders be developed for teachers.
- Incentives be provided to attract those with outstanding potential to the teaching profession.
- Teachers be involved in designing teacher preparation programs, supervising and evaluating teachers, and selecting teaching materials.

The situation that led to these findings and recommendations, and similar ones by many of the other study groups, did not develop overnight. Teachers have traditionally received low salaries, in part because of an abundant supply of qualified women for whom other career opportunities did not exist. Beginning in the late 1960s teacher salaries began to improve. While this growth coincided with the expansion of collective bargaining, it has been argued that collective bargaining did not have a large impact on salaries. Rather, it increased fringe benefit programs, an important part of any compensation system, and improved working conditions.[2] As opportunities for women developed in nontraditional professions, some of the most highly

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2. Impacts of Collective Bargaining Policy in Elementary and Secondary Education: A Review of Research and Methodology, Anthony M. Cresswell and Fay Spargo. Education Commission of the States: Denver, CO, 1980.

qualified individuals were drawn to careers other than teaching, which offered higher starting pay and/or a greater probability of higher compensation in the future. The traditional benefits of teaching, including the nature of the work and its working hours, apparently were no match for the opportunities available in other careers.

While the supply of people training to enter teaching was decreasing in the 1970s, pupil enrollments were declining more rapidly. An oversupply of teachers in the short term allowed policymakers to avoid dealing with the teacher salary issue for a decade. At the same time, however, new demands were being made of the education system. In the 1970s, educational opportunities were broadened for handicapped pupils, bilingual pupils, gifted and talented pupils, and pupils in need of compensatory education, with an increased demand for specialized personnel. In the 1980s, the public became concerned about pupil performance. This was not a new concern; periodically, as spending rises and taxes increase, the issue of pupil achievement is raised. But, this time, the public also was being exposed to a new phenomenon: technology and its impact on the economy. In 1983, America became "a nation at risk"; its ability to compete in an international economic system was viewed as being threatened by the quality of its education system.

Now, enrollments are growing again. Women have been successful in opening up new economic opportunities and teaching is becoming even less attractive. Computers have come (and, to some extent, gone) but they appear unlikely to replace teachers, although they may help teachers perform

better. Teacher shortages are beginning to cause problems in specific subject areas and regions. Finally, teacher salaries remain relatively low.

Many states have responded to this situation by taking action in 1984 to make the teaching profession more attractive. A number of states have begun the process of significantly increasing teacher salaries. North Carolina and Texas, for example have increased state support for education with a significant portion of the increase earmarked to improve teacher salaries by up to 25 percent. Tennessee has instituted a career ladder system designed to provide future salary growth to teachers who take on added responsibilities while improving their own skills. West Virginia and Arkansas have embarked on a long term plan to make salaries more equal across school districts.

Traditionally, states have played a small role in setting the level of teacher salaries. In a few states, the legislature establishes a statewide minimum salary schedule (as is done in Delaware). States may require that teachers be paid in relation to their training and/or experience although salaries are determined by local school districts (as is the case in Colorado). In some states, a portion of the new money provided in a given year may be earmarked for salary increases (as is done in Oklahoma). It is likely, at least during the initial period of implementation, that the introduction of merit pay or career ladder plans will result in higher salaries for teachers. Because state aid has increased as a proportion of all education support in many states, the availability of state aid, in and of itself, has a large indirect impact on teacher salaries.

The purpose of this paper is to examine differences among the states in how much teachers are paid. First, the relationship between numbers of teachers and numbers of pupils will be examined. Second, in order to place teacher salaries in a broader context, average teacher salaries will be compared to salaries for other educational personnel and to salaries for other professions. State average teacher salary levels, and changes in those levels over time, also will be reviewed. Third, the relationship between teacher salaries and classroom expenditures will be analyzed. Finally, state policies with regard to teacher salaries will be reviewed.

Trends in Numbers of Teachers and Pupils

Over the last ten years, the number of classroom teachers has decreased from about 2,131,000 to 2,111,000, a decline of less than a tenth of one percent. At the same time, elementary/secondary school enrollments decreased by 14.6 percent. The fact is that while enrollments decreased by 5.9 percent between 1974 and 1979, the number of teachers increased by 2.7 percent. Enrollments decreased by an additional 8.0 percent between 1979 and 1984; the number of teachers decreased by 3.6 percent during the same period. Because the number of teachers did not decrease as rapidly as the number of pupils, the cost per pupil increased more rapidly than it would have if enrollments had not declined. Rising per pupil costs may have been one factor

that interfered with salary increases for teachers. It should be noted that: (1) school districts probably could not have reduced the number of teachers as rapidly as enrollments were dropping under the best of circumstances and (2) the need to expand services to special, high cost pupil populations resulted in a need for more instructional staff. Therefore, it is unlikely that decreases in enrollments during the last decade could have been matched by decreases in numbers of teachers.

The response of school districts to declining enrollments has varied among the states. In some states, the number of teachers has decreased at the same time, but not necessarily at the same rate, as enrollment declined. In some states, the response has lagged; that is, reductions in the number of teachers have followed the decline in pupils by a few years. Finally, in some states, the number of teachers has increased as enrollments have declined, presumably in order to decrease the pupil-teacher ratio. As shown in Table 1, in 14 states (Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Minnesota, South Dakota and California) both the number of pupils and the number of teachers decreased between 1974 and 1979 and between 1979 and 1984. In most of these states, the decline in the number of teachers was not as rapid as the decline in pupils. For example, in Pennsylvania, pupils decreased by 11.8 percent between 1974 and 1979 and by 15.2 percent between 1979 and 1984; teachers decreased by 2.0 percent between 1974 and 1979 and by 7.8 percent between 1979 and 1984.

In 15 states (Massachusetts, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Indiana, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, Montana, Oregon and Washington) there has been a lag in the response to declining enrollments but, in the last five years, there has been a reduction in the teaching force. For example, in Virginia, enrollments decreased by 2.8 percent between 1974 and 1979 and by 8.4 percent between 1979 and 1984; the number of teachers increased by 9.4 percent between 1974 and 1979 but decreased by 8.8 percent between 1979 and 1984.

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF TEACHERS, BY STATE, IN 1974, 1979 AND 1984 AND CHANGE IN NUMBER OF TEACHERS AND PUPILS BETWEEN 1974 AND 1984

State	Number of Teachers [in thousands] 1974	1979	1984	% Change in Teachers 1974 to 1979	1979 to 1984	% Change in Enrollment 1974 to 1979	1979 to 1984
U.S. Average	2,131.4	2,189.9	2,111.4	2.7%	-3.6%	-5.9%	-8.0%
NEW ENGLAND	130.9	137.3	116.6	4.9	-15.0	-9.6	-16.5
Connecticut	34.8	34.7	32.7	-0.3	-5.6	-11.0	-17.9
Maine	11.6	11.6	12.3	0.6	5.4	-3.0	-13.0
Massachusetts	60.5	66.0	48.3	9.1	-26.9	-11.5	-18.7
New Hampshire	8.3	9.2	9.7	11.4	5.3	1.9	-9.2
Rhode Island	9.4	9.5	7.4	0.3	-21.3	-14.2	-14.1
Vermont	6.3	6.3	6.2	0.0	-1.3	-3.9	-10.4
MIDEAST	429.6	412.1	382.3	-4.1	-7.2	-11.0	-14.9
Delaware	6.3	6.1	5.4	-3.4	-10.4	-16.5	-17.7
Maryland	43.1	42.9	37.4	-0.2	-12.8	-10.9	-16.0
New Jersey	79.2	78.6	73.3	-0.8	-6.8	-9.7	-14.2
New York	188.0	173.7	164.0	-7.6	-5.6	-10.7	-14.6
Pennsylvania	113.1	119.8	102.2	-2.0	-7.8	-11.8	-15.2
SOUTHEAST	458.2	499.3	505.4	9.0	1.2	-0.5	-5.2
Alabama	34.7	37.0	39.2	6.6	6.1	-2.3	-4.2
Arkansas	20.0	23.1	23.9	15.7	3.4	-3.0	-6.6
Florida	67.8	76.3	83.1	12.6	8.9	5.4	-2.0
Georgia	50.1	52.3	56.3	4.4	7.6	-0.6	-2.7
Kentucky	31.4	33.3	32.0	6.3	-4.0	-2.4	-6.6
Louisiana	40.8	43.2	41.6	5.8	-3.6	-2.7	-6.2
Mississippi	23.5	25.7	24.9	9.5	-3.3	-5.5	-6.4
North Carolina	51.3	54.9	54.7	6.9	-0.3	0.1	-7.3
South Carolina	26.9	29.8	32.1	10.9	7.6	3.6	-4.6
Tennessee	37.2	41.0	39.1	10.3	-4.5	-0.5	-5.1
Virginia	56.3	61.6	56.2	9.4	-8.8	-2.8	-8.4
West Virginia	18.5	21.3	22.4	14.9	5.5	-3.4	-6.1

GREAT LAKES	409.8	403.7	363.8	-1.5	-9.9	-9.6	-12.8
Illinois	110.4	110.3	101.1	-0.1	-8.4	-9.2	-12.5
Indiana	52.7	53.7	49.5	1.9	-7.8	-7.6	-11.8
Michigan	90.8	82.4	73.0	-9.3	-11.4	-8.6	-13.8
Ohio	105.1	102.6	92.8	-2.4	-9.6	-11.5	-12.9
Wisconsin	50.8	54.8	47.6	7.8	-13.1	-10.2	-12.6
PLAINS	187.6	185.7	173.9	-1.0	-6.4	-10.6	-11.9
Iowa	32.5	33.0	30.7	1.6	-7.1	-9.8	-13.0
Kansas	25.6	25.5	25.5	-0.3	1.1	-10.1	-6.7
Minnesota	46.6	44.3	38.5	-5.1	-13.0	-10.5	-15.9
Missouri	48.5	48.7	46.7	0.5	-4.1	-11.7	-11.6
Nebraska	18.1	18.5	16.8	2.3	-9.4	-8.5	-10.1
North Dakota	7.8	7.4	7.4	-4.8	0.1	-12.0	-5.7
South Dakota	8.5	8.2	8.0	-2.8	-3.1	-12.2	-11.3
SOUTHWEST	196.7	225.8	248.0	14.8	9.8	1.1	3.6
Arizona	21.4	24.4	25.7	14.2	5.2	-5.4	7.1
New Mexico	12.5	13.8	15.5	10.0	12.8	0.1	-3.4
Oklahoma	29.1	32.3	35.7	11.1	10.6	-1.7	-0.1
Texas	133.8	155.4	171.1	16.1	10.1	3.1	4.5
ROCKY MOUNTAINS	59.6	66.4	71.2	11.4	7.3	1.9	2.6
Colorado	25.7	27.1	29.4	5.5	8.7	-2.6	-2.9
Idaho	8.3	9.8	9.9	18.7	0.7	9.9	1.6
Montana	8.6	9.7	9.4	11.8	-3.2	-3.3	-7.6
Utah	12.5	14.0	15.4	12.1	10.4	6.1	16.6
Wyoming	4.5	5.8	7.1	28.1	21.6	10.5	7.0
FAR WEST	259.0	259.6	250.2	0.2	-3.6	-4.7	-2.8
Alaska	4.0	5.1	6.4	25.0	26.3	7.8	-1.3
California	187.8	180.6	170.4	-3.8	-5.6	-6.1	-2.4
Hawaii	6.9	7.9	8.1	14.6	1.8	-4.3	-4.8
Nevada	5.6	6.5	7.3	16.8	12.1	8.2	3.4
Oregon	22.0	24.6	24.0	11.8	-2.4	-1.1	-5.2
Washington	32.7	34.9	34.0	6.9	-2.6	-2.4	-4.5

Source: Estimates of School Statistics, National Education Association, for 1974-75, 1979-80 and 1983-84.

In 13 states (Maine, New Hampshire, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, West Virginia, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Colorado, Alaska and Hawaii) the number of teachers has increased consistently in the face of consistent enrollment declines between 1974 and 1984 or in light of recent enrollment declines. In these states, enrollment decreases have been somewhat lower than average. For example, in Colorado, enrollments decreased by 2.6 percent between 1974 and 1979 and by 2.9 percent between 1979 and 1984; the number of teachers increased by 5.5 percent between 1974 and 1979 and by 8.7 percent between 1979 and 1984.

As a result of the changes in numbers of pupils and teachers, pupil-teacher ratios changed between 1974 and 1984. Overall, the pupil-teacher ratio dropped from 21.2 in 1974 to 19.4 in 1979 to 18.5 in 1984, a 12.7 percent decline over the decade. As shown in Table 2, the pupil-teacher ratio decreased both between 1974 and 1979 and between 1979 and 1984 in 41 states. In 1974, 35 states had pupil-teacher ratios greater than 20.0 while three states had pupil teacher ratios less than 18.0; by 1979, 20 states had pupil-teacher ratios greater than 20.0 and 16 states had pupil-teacher ratios less than 18.0; in 1984, only 10 states had pupil-teacher ratios greater than 20.0 and 25 states had pupil-teacher ratios less than 18.0.

During the last decade, teachers have declined slightly as a percentage of all instructional staff, as shown in Table 2. In 1974, teachers were 88.3 percent of all instructional staff; in 1979, teachers were 88.0 percent of all instructional staff; and in 1984, teachers were 87.9 percent of all

TABLE 2

PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO AND TEACHERS AS A PERCENTAGE OF INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF, BY STATE, IN 1974, 1979 AND 1984

State	Pupil-Teacher Ratio*			Teachers as a % of Instructional Staff		
	1974	1979	1984	1974	1979	1984
U.S. Average	21.2	19.4	18.5	88.8%	88.0%	87.9%
NEW ENGLAND	19.8	17.1	16.8	85.7	79.9	84.8
Connecticut	19.2	17.1	14.9	86.6	87.6	85.1
Maine	21.2	20.4	16.9	90.7	90.4	85.6
Massachusetts	20.2	16.4	18.2	83.7	73.3	84.9
New Hampshire	20.7	18.9	16.3	86.6	87.1	85.9
Rhode Island	19.6	16.8	18.3	87.2	86.2	84.7
Vermont	16.7	16.1	14.6	87.3	81.5	78.9
MIDEAST	19.3	17.9	16.5	87.7	87.3	87.3
Delaware	21.2	18.3	16.8	87.7	87.3	89.0
Maryland	21.2	18.9	18.2	88.1	87.4	85.9
New Jersey	18.7	17.0	15.7	83.6	83.2	83.2
New York	18.4	17.8	16.1	88.3	88.3	89.0
Pennsylvania	20.5	18.5	17.0	89.6	88.9	88.0
SOUTHEAST	21.8	19.9	18.6	90.9	89.9	89.3
Alabama	22.2	20.4	18.4	94.4	94.9	95.6
Arkansas	23.6	19.8	17.8	88.2	89.8	89.[illegible]
Florida	21.4	20.0	18.0	87.0	84.8	87.4
Georgia	21.7	20.7	18.7	95.6	95.6	95.6
Kentucky	22.6	20.8	20.2	89.3	88.8	88.5
Louisiana	20.6	19.0	18.5	94.9	95.2	89.7
Mississippi	22.1	19.1	18.5	89.5	89.2	89.2
North Carolina	22.9	21.4	19.9	91.0	88.0	87.6
South Carolina	22.6	21.1	18.7	84.8	87.3	86.8
Tennessee	23.6	21.3	21.1	89.8	86.3	86.8
Virginia	19.3	17.1	17.2	93.2	93.1	87.3
West Virginia	22.1	18.6	16.6	90.0	88.3	89.1

GREAT LAKES	22.1	20.3	19.6	88.9	88.3	88.1
Illinois	21.0	19.1	18.2	87.8	89.5	89.7
Indiana	22.9	20.8	19.9	88.7	88.9	88.4
Michigan	23.8	23.9	23.3	88.1	86.1	85.5
Ohio	22.6	20.4	19.7	88.0	85.0	85.1
Wisconsin	19.4	16.2	16.3	95.5	96.1	95.2
PLAINS	19.5	17.6	16.5	89.5	88.8	88.7
Iowa	19.4	17.2	16.1	85.8	91.4	91.3
Kansas	18.9	17.0	15.7	89.9	88.6	87.8
Minnesota	19.3	18.2	17.6	90.5	89.2	89.7
Missouri	21.0	18.5	17.0	89.3	87.2	86.6
Nebraska	17.9	16.0	15.9	90.9	88.0	88.9
North Dakota	17.8	16.5	15.5	91.8	89.3	88.9
South Dakota	18.6	16.8	15.4	93.0	87.8	90.0
SOUTHWEST	21.3	18.8	17.7	89.4	88.5	88.2
Arizona	25.2	20.9	21.3	89.0	88.7	77.2
New Mexico	22.3	20.3	17.4	89.3	85.6	88.0
Oklahoma	20.6	18.2	16.5	90.9	90.3	89.9
Texas	20.8	18.5	17.5	89.2	88.3	89.9
ROCKY MOUNTAINS	22.2	20.3	19.4	87.5	86.4	88.4
Colorado	22.3	20.6	18.4	85.8	81.9	89.3
Idaho	22.3	20.7	20.8	88.0	89.6	88.9
Montana	19.9	17.2	16.4	89.4	91.0	87.5
Utah	24.5	23.2	24.5	89.4	89.2	86.2
Wyoming	18.8	16.2	14.3	87.5	89.9	90.0
FAR WEST	23.6	22.5	22.7	88.1	88.7	86.5
Alaska	20.8	17.9	14.0	89.4	85.6	86.8
California	23.7	23.2	24.0	90.9	90.3	86.8
Hawaii	25.7	21.4	20.1	74.9	84.1	83.8
Nevada	24.3	22.5	20.7	87.2	88.1	88.0
Oregon	21.7	19.2	18.6	81.3	84.7	85.0
Washington	24.1	22.0	21.6	81.4	85.8	86.1

* Teacher-pupil ratio is enrollment divided by all classroom teachers.

Source: Estimates of School Statistics, National Education Association, for 1974-75, 1979-80 and 1983-84.

instructional staff. This pattern is a consistent one in most states with two states (Vermont and Arizona) having very low percentages of teachers relative to all instructional staff. In a few states (such as Massachusetts, Delaware and Colorado) the pattern has begun to reverse itself; in 1984, teachers were a higher percentage of all instructional staff than was the case in 1974 or 1979.

Average Teacher Salaries: Comparisons Between Professions and Across States

During the last year many people have concluded that teachers' salaries are too low. This conclusion is based not only on the actual dollars paid but on the way the market for teachers appears to be operating. If qualified individuals are not being attracted to a profession and a significant proportion of people already in the profession are choosing to leave it, an important factor to examine is the compensation received by people in the profession. There is some evidence that highly qualified people are not being attracted to teaching and there is a feeling that many experienced teachers are leaving the profession to find work in better paying jobs. In 1984, the average teacher earned about $22,000 in salary. Considering that half of all teachers had masters degrees and that the average teacher had 12 years of experience[3], that salary level hardly seems high. Of course there

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3. Digest of Education Statistics, 1983-84. National Center for Education Statistics: Washington, D.C. December, 1983.

are those who argue that teachers only work 7 hours a day for 180 days per year, which allows them to supplement their salaries with part-time work or summer employment. Assuming this to be a true reflection of the time spent on the job, the average teacher earned about $17.50 per hour during the school year, which would result in earnings of about $36,500 if a teacher worked 8 hours per day for 260 days each year. Teachers report, however, that they actually work over 45 hours each week during the school year, making it difficult to hold a part-time job; and since the 180 day school year spans about 42 weeks of the year, there are only 10 weeks when a teacher might be able to hold a second job, which might provide $500-600 per week.

The average salary of all teachers is low relative to those of many other professions. For example, in 1983, the mean salary of accountants ranged from $19,519 to $51,798, depending on level of responsibility; attorneys earned between $28,119 and $84,917, depending on level; computer programmers and analysts had salaries that ranged between $19,777 and $38,125, depending on responsibility; and job analysts earned between $19,894 and $33,084, depending on level. The mean salary of drafters, at the fourth of five levels of responsibility, of computer operators, at the fifth of six levels of responsibility, and of photographers, at the third of four levels of responsibility, exceeded the mean salary of teachers. Top level personnel clerks/assistants and secretaries earned more in 1983 than the average teacher.[4]

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4. National Survey of Professional, Administrative, Technical, and Clerical Pay, March 1983. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: Washington, D.C., September, 1983.

Classroom teachers also are paid relatively low compared to other school personnel. On average, librarians earn about six percent more than teachers; counselors earn about 18 percent more than teachers; vice-principals earn between 32 and 50 percent more than teachers; and principals earn between 55 and 81 percent more than teachers. Central administrative staff, excluding superintendents, earn between 45 and 76 percent more than teachers.[5] Interestingly, since 1973 the number of principals and supervisors has increased by about 7.6 percent.

Starting salaries for teachers are extremely low, between 60 and 80 percent of the starting salary paid to other individuals with a bachelor's degree. More importantly, after a few years on the job, the gap widens enormously; compared to almost any other profession, the salary potential of teaching is limited.[6]

Teacher salaries have not kept pace with inflation during the past decade. Between 1974 and 1984, the consumer price index increased by 129.4 percent. Teacher salaries increased during the same period by 104.3 percent. Between 1974 and 1979, the consumer price index grew by 46.4 percent while the average teacher salary increased by 39.7 percent; between 1979 and 1984 the consumer price index grew by 56.7 percent while the average teacher salary increased by 46.2 percent.

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5. Scheduled Salaries for Professional Personnel in Public Schools, 1982-83. Educational Research Service: Arlington, VA, 1983.

6. The Condition of Teaching, C. Emily Feistritzer. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching: Princeton, NJ, 1983.

There is a wide variation among the states in teacher salaries and in the growth in salaries during the past decade. In 1984 the average teacher salary was $22,019; between 1974 and 1984, the average teacher salary increased by 104.3 percent, as shown in Table 3. In 1984 the average state teacher salary varied from $15,895, or 72 percent of the national average, to $28,877, or 131 percent of the national average, excluding Alaska. Nineteen states had average salaries higher than the national average while 31 states had average salaries lower than the national average. Between 1974 and 1979, the national average teacher salary grew by 39.7 percent; between 1979 and 1984, the national average salary level grew by 46.2 percent, more rapidly than in the previous five years. In seven states, growth in average salary was lower than the national average between 1974 and 1979 and between 1979 and 1984. In 17 states, growth in average salary exceeded the national average in both five year periods; despite consistently high growth, however, in 11 of those states, the state average salary in 1984 was below the national average.

The Relationship Between Teacher Salaries and Education Expenditures

Most analyses of education expenditures focus on per pupil expenditures because the pupil is the unit that receives service. Because enrollments were declining and inflation was relatively high, per pupil expenditures grew enormously, by about 188 percent, between 1974 and 1984. Another way to look at education expenditures is in terms of those who provide the service. In per teacher terms, expenditures grew by about 143 percent during the last

decade. In 1984, $54,536 was spent per classroom teacher for current operations, as shown in Table 4. Among the 49 states excluding Alaska, expenditures per teacher ranged from $37,471, or 69 percent of the national average, to $74,967, or 137 percent of the national average. Nineteen states had per teacher expenditures above the national average while 31 states had per teacher expenditures below the national average.

Between 1974 and 1979, per teacher expenditures grew by 55.7 percent. Growth varied from a low of 31.8 percent in Vermont to a high of 105.2 percent in Alaska. Between 1979 and 1984, per teacher expenditures increased by 55.9 percent, similar to the increase in the previous five year period. Growth varied from a low of 18.6 percent in Arizona to a high of 121.0 percent in Hawaii.

Teacher salaries have declined as a percentage of current operating expenditures between 1974 and 1984, as shown in Table 5. In 1974, teacher salaries accounted for 48.0 percent of all current expenditures; by 1984 teacher salaries accounted for 40.4 percent of expenditures. Thus, while education expenditures were increasing by about 140 percent during the past decade and the number of teachers remained constant, the share of all current expenditures devoted to teacher salaries was declining. This decline was consistent across all states, regardless of how rapidly expenditures increased or enrollments declined and without regard to changes in the number of teachers employed. In 1974, the percentage of all current expenditures devoted to teacher salaries ranged from 41.0 percent in Oregon to 55.1 percent in New Hampshire. In 1984 the share of current expenditures devoted to

TABLE 3

AVERAGE TEACHER SALARIES, BY STATE,
IN 1974, 1979 AND 1984

State	Average Teacher Salary			State Average as a Percent of U.S. Average			Percentage Change	
	1974	1979	1984	1974	1979	1984	1974 to 1979	1979 to 1984
U.S. Average	$10,778	$15,057	$22,019	100%	100%	100%	39.7%	46.2%
NEW ENGLAND	10,750	15,637	21,456	100	104	97	45.5	37.2
Connecticut	11,030	15,482	22,624	102	103	103	40.4	46.1
Maine	9,238	12,553	17,328	86	83	79	35.9	38.0
Massachusetts	11,121	17,000	22,500	103	113	102	52.9	32.4
New Hampshire	9,613	11,825	17,376	89	79	79	23.0	46.9
Rhode Island	11,407	16,778	24,641	106	111	112	47.1	46.9
Vermont	8,932	11,786	17,931	83	78	81	32.0	52.1
MIDEAST	12,272	17,038	24,685	114	113	112	38.8	44.9
Delaware	11,304	15,100	20,925	105	100	95	33.6	38.6
Maryland	11,741	16,587	24,095	109	110	109	41.3	45.3
New Jersey	11,920	16,172	23,044	111	107	105	35.7	42.5
New York	13,371	18,500	26,750	124	123	121	38.4	44.6
Pennsylvania	10,921	15,510	22,800	101	103	104	42.0	47.0
SOUTHEAST	9,249	13,011	18,506	86	86	84	40.7	42.2
Alabama	9,226	12,948	18,000	86	86	82	40.3	39.0
Arkansas	7,820	11,126	16,929	73	74	77	42.3	52.2
Florida	10,018	14,005	19,545	93	93	89	39.8	39.6
Georgia	9,392	12,916	18,505	87	86	84	37.5	43.3
Kentucky	8,295	13,170	19,780	77	87	90	58.8	50.2
Louisiana	9,166	13,015	19,100	85	86	87	42.0	46.8
Mississippi	7,604	11,101	15,895	71	74	72	46.0	43.2
North Carolina	10,223	13,676	18,014	95	91	82	33.8	31.7
South Carolina	8,654	12,150	17,500	80	81	79	40.4	44.0
Tennessee	8,840	12,920	17,900	82	86	81	46.2	38.5
Virginia	9,919	13,288	19,867	92	88	90	34.0	49.5
West Virginia	8,467	12,752	17,482	79	85	79	50.6	37.1

GREAT LAKES	11,264	15,652	23,680	105	104	108	39.0	51.3
Illinois	11,871	16,498	23,345	110	110	106	39.0	41.5
Indiana	10,508	14,285	21,587	97	95	98	35.9	51.1
Michigan	12,545	17,610	28,877	116	117	131	40.4	64.0
Ohio	10,107	14,280	21,421	94	95	97	41.3	50.0
Wisconsin	10,830	14,915	23,000	100	99	104	37.7	54.2
PLAINS	9,757	13,582	20,506	91	90	93	39.2	51.0
Iowa	9,863	14,202	20,140	92	94	91	44.0	41.8
Kansas	8,894	12,859	19,598	83	85	89	44.6	52.4
Minnesota	11,122	15,509	24,480	103	103	111	39.4	57.8
Missouri	9,530	12,711	19,300	88	84	88	33.4	51.8
Nebraska	9,174	12,635	18,785	85	84	85	37.7	48.7
North Dakota	8,493	12,288	20,363	79	82	92	44.7	65.7
South Dakota	8,150	11,420	16,480	76	76	75	40.1	44.3
SOUTHWEST	8,993	13,158	20,065	83	87	91	46.3	52.5
Arizona	10,414	15,200	21,605	97	101	98	46.0	42.1
New Mexico	9,100	13,005	20,760	84	86	94	42.9	59.6
Oklahoma	8,238	12,235	18,490	76	81	84	48.5	51.1
Texas	8,920	13,042	20,100	83	87	91	46.2	54.1
ROCKY MOUNTAINS	9,547	14,127	21,596	89	94	98	48.0	52.9
Colorado	10,131	14,888	22,895	94	99	104	47.0	53.8
Idaho	8,383	12,607	18,640	78	84	85	50.4	47.9
Montana	9,429	13,651	20,657	87	91	94	44.8	51.3
Utah	9,146	13,907	20,256	85	92	92	52.1	45.7
Wyoming	9,688	14,469	24,500	90	96	111	49.3	69.3
FAR WEST	12,579	17,354	25,934	117	115	118	38.0	49.4
Alaska	15,667	24,150	36,564	145	160	166	54.1	51.4
California	13,113	17,760	26,403	122	118	120	35.4	48.7
Hawaii	11,112	18,357	24,357	103	122	111	65.2	32.7
Nevada	11,549	15,306	23,000	107	102	104	32.5	50.3
Oregon	10,180	14,904	22,833	94	99	104	46.4	53.2
Washington	11,295	17,357	24,780	105	115	113	53.7	42.8

Source: Estimates of School Statistics, National Education Association, for 1974-75, 1979-80 and 1983-84.

TABLE 4

AVERAGE CURRENT EXPENDITURE PER TEACHER,
BY STATE, IN 1974, 1979 and 1984

State	Average Expenditure Per Teacher*			State Average as a Percent of U.S. Average			Percentage Change	
	1974	1979	1984	1974	1979	1984	1974 to 1979	1979 to 1984
U.S. Average	$22,464	$34,970	$54,536	100%	100%	100%	55.7%	55.9%
NEW ENGLAND	22,028	35,462	53,092	98	101	97	61.0	49.7
Connecticut	24,927	38,045	55,661	111	109	102	52.6	46.3
Maine	17,640	31,661	44,697	79	91	82	79.5	41.2
Massachusetts	21,910	37,141	55,628	98	106	102	69.5	49.8
New Hampshire	17,433	26,303	41,239	78	75	76	50.9	56.8
Rhode Island	23,351	34,600	61,266	104	99	112	48.2	77.1
Vermont	19,287	25,423	45,229	86	73	83	31.8	77.9
MIDEAST	27,099	40,893	65,205	121	117	120	50.9	59.5
Delaware	26,678	39,354	56,880	119	113	104	47.5	44.5
Maryland	22,975	39,734	61,576	102	114	113	72.9	55.0
New Jersey	25,928	39,456	70,094	115	113	129	52.2	77.7
New York	29,872	43,489	68,918	133	124	126	45.6	58.5
Pennsylvania	24,903	38,379	57,512	111	110	105	54.1	49.9
SOUTHEAST	18,670	29,078	44,520	83	83	82	55.7	53.1
Alabama	16,973	27,503	37,471	76	79	69	62.0	36.2
Arkansas	16,877	24,041	37,810	75	69	69	42.4	57.3
Florida	21,827	33,546	52,975	97	96	97	53.7	57.9
Georgia	18,001	25,380	41,378	80	73	76	41.0	63.0
Kentucky	16,430	29,859	46,656	73	85	86	81.7	56.3
Louisiana	18,450	28,845	46,852	82	82	86	56.3	62.4
Mississippi	16,260	25,670	34,497	72	73	63	57.9	34.4
North Carolina	20,161	31,897	45,817	90	91	84	58.2	43.6
South Carolina	18,926	29,631	42,009	84	85	77	56.6	41.8
Tennessee	17,894	29,186	43,037	80	83	79	63.1	47.5
Virginia	18,679	28,051	47,545	83	80	87	50.2	69.5
West Virginia	18,293	28,438	39,725	81	81	73	55.5	39.7

GREAT LAKES	23,226	37,017	57,924	103	106	106	59.4	56.5
Illinois	23,322	36,880	54,131	104	105	99	58.1	46.8
Indiana	20,505	31,762	48,510	91	91	89	54.9	52.7
Michigan	27,103	49,130	74,967	121	140	137	81.3	52.6
Ohio	21,556	32,563	56,379	96	93	103	51.1	73.1
Wisconsin	22,373	32,571	52,646	100	93	97	45.6	61.6
PLAINS	19,687	31,245	47,760	88	89	88	58.7	52.9
Iowa	20,944	35,358	49,019	93	101	90	68.8	38.6
Kansas	17,578	30,241	47,309	78	86	87	72.0	56.4
Minnesota	23,269	37,296	57,965	104	107	106	60.3	55.4
Missouri	18,055	26,776	41,342	80	77	76	48.3	54.4
Nebraska	18,703	28,216	44,087	83	81	81	50.9	56.2
North Dakota	16,439	23,913	49,548	73	68	91	45.5	107.2
South Dakota	15,939	25,146	38,747	71	72	71	57.8	54.1
SOUTHWEST	17,830	27,794	45,586	79	79	84	55.9	64.0
Arizona	22,352	40,962	48,567	99	117	89	83.3	18.6
New Mexico	19,602	31,554	48,238	87	90	88	61.0	52.9
Oklahoma	17,135	30,676	51,354	76	88	94	79.0	67.4
Texas	17,093	24,794	43,695	76	71	80	45.1	76.2
ROCKY MOUNTAINS	20,449	34,147	52,117	91	98	96	67.0	52.6
Colorado	22,472	38,580	55,786	100	110	102	71.7	44.6
Idaho	17,937	27,467	43,939	80	79	81	53.1	60.0
Montana	18,558	32,236	53,870	83	92	99	73.7	67.1
Utah	18,845	32,693	45,917	84	93	84	73.5	40.5
Wyoming	21,598	31,450	59,513	96	90	109	45.6	89.2
FAR WEST	26,494	42,574	68,484	118	122	126	60.7	60.9
Alaska	30,998	63,623	90,597	138	182	166	105.2	42.4
California	27,060	43,234	69,528	120	124	127	59.8	60.8
Hawaii	24,562	33,421	73,876	109	96	135	36.1	121.0
Nevada	23,497	35,935	55,087	105	103	101	52.9	53.3
Oregon	24,802	37,262	65,078	110	107	119	50.2	74.6
Washington	24,741	43,164	63,087	110	123	116	74.5	46.2

* Average expenditure is total current expenditure divided by total classroom teachers.

Source: Estimates of School Statistics, National Education Association, for 1974-75, 1979-80 and 1983-84.

TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE OF CURRENT EXPENDITURES SPENT ON TEACHER SALARIES IN 1974, 1979 AND 1984, TOTAL CURRENT EXPENDITURES IN 1984 AND CHANGE IN CURRENT EXPENDITURES BETWEEN 1974 AND 1984, BY STATE

State	Teacher Salaries as a Percent of Expenditures*			Total Current Expenditures in 1984**	% Change in Expenditures	
	1974	1979	1984		1974 to 1979	1979 to 1984
U.S. Average	48.0%	43.1%	40.4%	$115,147,339	60.0%	50.4%
NEW ENGLAND	48.8	44.1	40.4	6,193,125	68.9	27.2
Connecticut	44.3	40.7	40.6	1,820,942	52.1	38.1
Maine	52.4	39.6	38.8	548,568	80.5	48.9
Massachusetts	50.8	45.8	40.4	2,684,976	84.9	9.5
New Hampshire	55.1	45.0	42.1	400,760	68.1	65.1
Rhode Island	48.8	48.5	40.2	455,879	48.6	39.4
Vermont	46.3	46.4	39.6	282,000	31.8	75.6
MIDEAST	45.3	41.7	37.9	24,926,903	44.8	47.9
Delaware	42.4	38.4	36.8	309,200	42.5	29.5
Maryland	51.1	41.7	39.1	2,305,214	72.5	35.1
New Jersey	46.0	41.0	32.9	5,135,200	51.0	65.7
New York	44.8	42.5	38.8	11,302,489	34.5	49.6
Pennsylvania	43.9	40.4	39.6	5,874,800	51.1	38.1
SOUTHEAST	49.5	44.7	41.6	22,500,751	69.7	55.0
Alabama	54.4	47.1	48.0	1,468,844	72.7	44.5
Arkansas	46.3	46.3	44.8	903,544	64.8	62.7
Florida	45.9	41.7	36.9	4,400,811	73.0	72.0
Georgia	52.2	50.9	44.7	2,328,335	47.2	75.4
Kentucky	50.5	44.1	42.4	1,493,000	93.1	50.1
Louisiana	49.7	45.1	40.8	1,950,000	65.5	56.6
Mississippi	46.8	43.2	46.1	857,729	72.9	30.0
North Carolina	50.7	42.9	39.3	2,506,603	69.2	43.2
South Carolina	45.7	41.0	41.7	1,347,235	73.6	52.5
Tennessee	49.4	44.3	41.6	1,684,284	79.9	40.8
Virginia	53.1	47.4	41.8	2,669,848	64.4	54.6
West Virginia	46.3	44.8	44.0	890,518	78.7	47.3

GREAT LAKES	48.5	42.3	40.9	21,074,534	57.0	41.0
Illinois	50.9	44.7	43.1	5,470,257	58.0	34.5
Indiana	51.2	45.0	44.5	2,399,123	57.8	40.8
Michigan	46.3	35.8	38.5	5,469,199	64.5	35.1
Ohio	46.9	43.9	38.0	5,230,000	47.5	56.5
Wisconsin	48.4	45.8	43.7	2,505,955	57.0	40.5
PLAINS	49.6	43.5D	42.9	8,305,770	57.1	43.1
Iowa	47.1	40.2	41.1	1,504,200	71.5	28.8
Kansas	50.6	42.5	41.4	1,220,676	71.6	58.1
Minnesota	47.8	41.6	42.2	2,234,200	52.2	35.3
Missouri	52.8	47.5	46.7	1,931,228	49.0	48.1
Nebraska	49.0	44.8	42.6	740,000	54.3	41.5
North Dakota	51.7	51.4	41.1	365,913	38.4	107.3
South Dakota	51.1	45.4	42.5	309,553	53.4	49.3
SOUTHWEST	50.4	47.3	44.0	11,304,448	79.0	80.1
Arizona	46.6	37.1	44.5	1,246,333	109.3	24.7
New Mexico	46.4	41.2	43.0	749,137	77.0	72.5
Oklahoma	48.1	39.9	36.0	1,832,978	98.9	85.1
Texas	52.2	52.6	46.0	7,476,000	68.5	94.1
ROCKY MOUNTAINS	46.7	41.4	41.4	3,710,159	85.9	63.7
Colorado	45.1	38.6	41.0	1,642,733	81.2	57.2
Idaho	46.7	45.9	42.4	435,000	81.8	61.1
Montana	50.8	42.3	38.3	503,685	94.2	61.7
Utah	49.5	42.5	44.1	708,641	94.4	55.1
Wyoming	44.9	46.0	41.2	420,100	86.5	130.1
FAR WEST	47.5	40.8	37.9	17,131,649	61.0	55.0
Alaska	50.5	38.0	40.4	578,642	156.6	79.8
California	48.5	41.1	38.0	11,850,000	53.6	51.7
Hawaii	45.2	54.9	33.0	596,400	55.9	125.0
Nevada	49.2	42.6	41.8	401,746	78.7	71.8
Oregon	41.0	40.0	35.1	1,561,216	67.9	70.5
Washington	45.7	40.2	39.3	2,143,645	86.5	42.3

* Calculated by subtracting the product of average teacher salary and number of teachers from total current expenditures.
** Expenditures are in thousands of dollars.

Source: Estimates of School Statistics, National Education Association, for 1974-75, 1979-80 and 1983-84.

teacher salaries ranged from 32.9 percent in New Jersey to 48.0 percent in Alabama. These figures indicate that as new funds have been provided for education, they have been used increasingly to pay for resources other than classroom teachers. The nature of those resources is not clear; it is likely, however, that increases in instructional personnel other than teachers, in administrative costs, in materials, in energy-related costs and in transportation costs have been the objects of increased expenditures.

The State Role in Setting Teacher Salaries

Most states do not play a central role in determining teachers' salaries. However, many states play an indirect role through the provision of state aid or the requirement that minimum salaries be paid. In a few states, such as Mississippi, the legislature establishes a minimum salary level below which no teacher can be paid. In such states, the minimum is not viewed as the actual salary that ought to be paid but rather as a floor above which salaries should be set by individual school districts depending upon their preferences and capacities to provide support. At least 15 states, such as Colorado, require that each school district use a salary schedule in paying teachers; typically, the schedule is driven by the training and experience of teachers and the use of the schedule is designed to encourage equity within districts (between men and women, elementary and secondary teachers, and among teachers of different subjects) rather than equity among districts. A few states, such as Georgia, employ a statewide minimum salary schedule, which serves as a floor for all teacher salaries while promoting

equity for teachers across the state.

In a few states, such as Delaware, a link is made between a statewide minimum salary schedule and the distribution of state aid to school districts. In this way, the state assures that adequate funds are provided to meet the requirements of the salary schedule; even under this circumstance, however, school districts may supplement state support and increase the salaries of teachers to whatever degree they choose.

Recently, a few states have earmarked a portion of the annual increase in state support for teacher salary increases. In Oklahoma, this has been occurring for a decade; in Arkansas, the use of this procedure began last year. The purpose of this approach is to assure that a specified portion of state support ends up in the hands of teachers.

Last year, a few states became much more involved in determining teacher salary levels. In Tennessee, for example, the state has provided funds for the implementation of a statewide career ladder plan. Under the plan, teachers move up the ladder as they gain experience and are reviewed favorably; as teachers move up, they become eligible for increases in salary (teachers moving to the same level receive the same salary increase as opposed to an increase that is a percentage of their base salaries, which may vary among districts), some of which is to pay for additional time to be spent on the job. The state pays for the salary increases caused by career advancement. Texas passed similar legislation in the summer of 1984.

Other states, such as Virginia, are providing funds to help districts

create pilot programs to promote career ladders. These approaches have raised some questions about the equity of state support. If it turns out that the teachers who are the most successful in climbing a career ladder happen to be employed by relatively wealthy school districts, particularly those that pay higher base wages, the state will end up allocating funds inefficiently, providing more funds to wealthy districts that can afford to pay for teacher salary increases themselves and not helping poor districts to attract highly qualified teachers.

Conclusion

Teacher's salaries are relatively low by almost any measure used to evaluate them. Recent trends do not indicate that they are improving dramatically. In the past year, several states have taken steps to raise teacher salary levels and to make teaching more attractive. In some of those cases, state policymakers have become much more involved in the teaching profession, especially as far as salaries are concerned, than has traditionally been the case.

It is likely that states will play a more central role in setting teacher's salaries in the future. This is true for three reasons: (1) the desire to improve the status of the teaching profession by raising salary levels in general or replacing salary schedules driven by training and experience with career ladders or other approaches more closely linked to performance; (2) the desire to equalize salary levels across the state by

setting statewide minimum levels, capping maximum levels or establishing statewide standards for salary increases; and (3) the need to resolve the conflict between the allocation of state funds and local collective bargaining in those states where the state provides the vast majority of funds for education.

Teachers will need to keep an eye on this trend and determine if they are better served by increased state involvement in setting salary levels. Other interest groups, such as school boards, will also need to monitor the state role in setting salaries to assure that there is balance between the desire to improve the teaching profession and the ability to fund such improvements. Finally, citizens will need to evaluate whether the political costs of increased state involvement in setting teacher's salaries are warranted by improvements in the educational attainment of pupils.

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